

Kingdom of God

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Hi my name is Abigail Yosef and I use she/her pronouns.

The topic of the Kingdom of God is rooted deeply in Second Temple Jewish tradition. It ultimately developed from a perception of God as Israel's king, whose rule at some point in the future will encompass the whole earth. In order to effectively understand this topic we must draw from the references in the Gospels as well as the Acts of the Apostles.

Jesus's main message and gospel or good news is that the Kingdom of God is at hand (Mark 1:15). This allows us to understand that it is something we need to pay attention to, and it is attainable. Matthew refers to this concept as the Kingdom of Heaven. He speaks that those who are blessed will inherit the kingdom (Matthew 5:3). Being blessed has a positive connotation making the Kingdom of Heaven a place one would want to inherit. In the Gospel of John the kingdom of God is a place that in order to enter it (which we should want), you must be born of water and the spirit (John 3:5).

The Kingdom of God is also discussed in Acts and the Epistles. The expressions "kingdom" and "kingdom of God" occur eight times in the book of Acts. The Paul of Acts teaches that "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (14:22). The book of Acts concludes on a positive note, saying that Paul "welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ" (28:30-31). It is thus clear from these references that God's rule remains the focus of the expression, even though Jesus is presented as its decisive mediator.

In learning this we now realize that Jesus plays a large role in inheriting the kingdom. It is not an accomplishment of ourselves but rather the work of the mediator. We also can realize that this is an eternal place and goes further than an earthly concept. Thank you!

Bibliography

Craig A. Evans, "Kingdom of God." Pages 2:412-417 in Daniel M. Gurtner and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds. *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*. T&T Clark, 2020.